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March 30, 2016

Brookings County Commissioners
520 Third Street
Suite 210
Brookings, SD 57006

Dear Brookings County Commissioners,

At the April 5th County Commissioners meeting, members of the Brookings Farmers Market Board of Directors will be seeking your support regarding a recurring street closure near the Brookings County Courthouse. We would like to bring vitality back to the market by offering fresh food and locally produced products to citizens in a beautiful, family-friendly location.

One big issue the market continually faces is the location. The currently City Plaza lot location lacks green space, shade, and nearby activities, and in general does not provide an inviting atmosphere. In a recent customer survey, parking, shade, green space, proximity to downtown, and proximity to neighborhoods were marked as the five most important aspects of the market location. While the current lot has easy parking, we believe there is a better location to suit our customers' desires and would like to see a change made for the 2016 market season. We are pursuing a weekly closure of a portion of 6th Ave, the road that runs between the Library and County Courthouse and connects at the beginning of Kidoodle Lane's one-way section. The included map details the proposed closure and suggested booth set-up. We have looked into other locations and this is the best option we can find to align with customers' expectations and our vendor's amenity requirements (vehicle access, electrical power, pavement, etc).

We are requesting the northern half of 6th Ave closes on Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning for the market vendors to set-up on the street. The southern half will still be open to allow for parking and easy access to the back library parking lot. The Arts Council, Library, and Flaskey Chiropractic (new 317 6th Ave tenant) have approved the closure. We are working with the Children's Museum of South Dakota to gain their support as well. We believe the proximity to other activities will invite collaboration between entities, like a kid's book reading, artist demonstration, or family games. We also hope to attract more vendors like food trucks, artists, crafters, and entertainers (and of course more customers too). Our marketing efforts are increasing, social media presence is expanding, and we plan to host more market-sponsored events. The current market hours are Wednesday from 3-6 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., May through October. However, we are voting on updated hours at our 3/31 vendor meeting. If approved by our vendors, the new hours would be Wednesday 3-6 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Both the hour and location changes were frequently requested by customers in our survey.

A few common questions that have come up are:

- Electricity: We are working with Brookings Municipal Utilities to have a meter placed off of a city street light or to pull power from the Arts Council building. We would pay a monthly electricity bill either way.
- Parking: Parking is available on 3rd St and the remainder of 6th Ave. Approximately 25 parking spaces would be available in the 6th Ave section immediately behind the library, as well as additional spots across the street. A sign will be placed by the north side of the library to reserve those spots for library employees.

- Children's Museum Traffic: Children's Museum traffic frequently passes through 6th Ave on Saturday morning. We could assist in directing traffic by marking museum directions on our sandwich boards. We are working with the Children's Museum to brainstorm other solutions as well.
- Barricades: We will work with the Street Department to have barricades placed. Barricades would likely need to go up around 12 or 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and 7 a.m. on Saturdays.
- Signage: We will have sandwich boards placed a few locations around the Market to direct people to the location and parking. If the move goes well, we hope to possibly see permanent signage placed in the future. We could also note museum parking directions on the sign if desired.
- Tents: We will switch to a few smaller communal tents instead of the large tent currently used at the City Plaza lot. The large tent is too much work to take up and down each market day and would be too large for the space anyway. Each vendor will continue to use their own small tents.
- Garbage: We will provide garbage receptacles as in the previous location.
- Growth: If the market becomes larger over the years, we would seek to close the entirety of 6th Ave weekly. The Arts Council, Library, and Fliskey Chiropractic already support a full closure of 6th Ave, though we won't need the full street to begin with so are only requesting a partial closure. If an additional closure is needed in the future, we will fill out the city's street closure form again and speak to all entities for approval again.

While this street closure may require outside visitors to the courthouse and Children's Museum to drive a little more to reach their parking location, we believe the overall positive impact the market move will have on the Brookings community will be worth it. The Farmers Market has a lot of potential and we really would like to see it become another "jewel" of Brookings, similar to how the Children's Museum is perceived by the community. A 6th Ave farmers market would not only get Brookings residents involved in healthy eating engagement, sustainable practices, and local entrepreneur support, but also introduces outside museum visitors to these ideas as well. We can really showcase the vibrancy of Brookings. Street closures near businesses are a very common set-up for farmers market, seen in cities like the Historic Haymarket area of Lincoln, NE and Hennepin Ave in Minneapolis, MN.

We look forward to speaking with you all on the 5th. If you have any questions prior to that point, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 605-759-8774 or brookingsmarket@gmail.com. We would appreciate your support in approving the weekly road closure to relocate the Brookings Farmers Market to 6th Ave.

Thank you,



Kirsten Gjesdal
At-Large Board Member
Brookings Farmers Market

Enclosures: 6th_Ave_Closure_Maps.pdf